

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 041689

CINCLANT FOR ADMIRAL KIDD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, NATO, IC

SUBJECT: AWACS DEPLOYMENT TO ICELAND

REFS: (A) 77 STATE 255233 (DTG 252009Z OCT 77); (B) 77
REYKJAVIK 1468 (DTG 131129Z OCT 77)

1. DEPARTMENT AND DOD NOW BELIEVE TIME IS RIGHT TO INFORM
GOI ONCE AGAIN OF US DEPLOYMENT OF TWO E-3A (AWACS) AIR-
CRAFT TO IDF AND TO DISCUSS WITH GOI MEASURES THAT MUST BE
TAKEN TO ACCOMMODATE NEW SYSTEM. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR
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EMBASSY INTEREST, ADVICE AND AWARENESS OF THE MANY FACTORS
INVOLVED IN THIS IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENT OF OUR DEFENSIVE
CAPABILITIES. WE ALSO CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE
MOST UNWISE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO ESTABLISH THE PRE-
CEDENT OF SEEKING PERMISSION FOR UPGRADING THE EQUIPMENT
AND RESOURCES WE COMMIT TO IMPROVE ALLIANCE DEFENSE POS-

TURE. MOREOVER, ANY EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE GOI TO LINK AWACS DEPLOYMENT TO THE TERMINAL ISSUE WOULD BE EQUALLY UNWISE AND COULD PROVE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AS USG REACHES DELICATE STAGE OF OUR CONSIDERATION OF THAT ISSUE. STATE AND DEFENSE BOTH RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, SENSITIVITY OF BASE/GOI RELATIONS AND NEED TO OBTAIN ICELANDIC CONCURRENCE OR ACQUIESCENCE IN ADDITION OF 200 US MILITARY PERSONNEL NECESSITATED BY UPGRADING TO AWACS SYSTEM.

2. IN SEPTEMBER 1977, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BROWN INFORMED FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON OF THE PROGRAMMED REPLACEMENT OF THE EC-121T AIRCRAFT WITH THE E-3A. ADMIRAL KIDD ALSO DISCUSSED AWACS DEPLOYMENT TO KEFLAVIK DURING THE MINISTER'S SUBSEQUENT VISIT TO CINCLANT NORFOLK. THE EC-121T, PRESENTLY PERFORMING AN AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING MISSION OUT OF KEFLAVIK, IS AT THE END OF ITS USEFUL SERVICE LIFE, AND CONGRESS HAS INSISTED THAT IT BE PHASED OUT OF ACTIVE SERVICE IN FY 79. THE E-3A REPLACEMENT WILL PROVIDE A QUANTUM INCREASE IN EARLY WARNING AND SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITY, ESPECIALLY LOW-LEVEL SURVEILLANCE. THE DEPLOYMENT WILL BE THE FIRST FULL TIME OPERATIONAL USE OUTSIDE THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES OF THESE SOPHISTICATED AND HIGHLY EFFECTIVE ASSETS.

3. THE MILITARY PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS WILL BE 242 FOR MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS; 30 FOR SECURITY; AND 11 FOR BASE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT. WITH AN OFFSET OF THE EC-121T
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ASSOCIATED BILLETS NOW AVAILABLE, OVERALL BASE POPULATION WILL INCREASE BY APPROXIMATELY 200 MILITARY PERSONNEL. THE US BELIEVES THAT WE HAVE ALREADY MET OUR REQUIREMENTS TO REDUCE PERSONNEL UNDER THE 1974 MOU AND THAT IS A CLOSED CHAPTER. THE INCREASES ARE ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORT THE DEPLOYMENT OF A NEW COMPLEX SYSTEM WHICH WILL GREATLY ENHANCE OUR ABILITIES TO DEFEND ICELAND AND SERVE ALLIANCE NEEDS.

4. THE US WILL CONTINUE TO COMPLETELY ABIDE BY THE OBLIGATION UNDER THE 1974 MOU TO DOMICILE ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL IN AGREED AREAS. APPROXIMATELY 20 CIVILIAN CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL WILL BE REQUIRED. THESE POSITIONS MAY NOT BE FILLED BY ICELANDERS BECAUSE OF SECURITY REQUIREMENTS. THE HANGAR (885) NOW BEING USED FOR EC-121T OPERATIONS MUST BE MODIFIED. IN ADDITION, CONSTRUCTION OF A BUILDING (APPROXIMATELY 5,000 SQUARE FEET), A CHAIN LINK SECURITY FENCE AND A PAVED PARKING AREA ARE NECESSARY.

5. EMBASSY SHOULD COMMUNICATE FOLLOWING POINTS TO DEPUTY PERMANENT UNDERSECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS

HELGASON (SEE HELGASON'S COMMENTS ON AWACS, PARA 2, REF A).
WE ALSO SUGGEST THAT ADMIRAL BERNSTEIN PARTICIPATE SO
THAT HE MIGHT PROVIDE, IF ASKED, ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON
REQUIREMENTS AND TIMING OF AWACS DEPLOYMENT.

POINTS:

-- PLEASED TO INFORM YOU THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOW
ABLE TO PROCEED WITH THE DEPLOYMENT OF TWO E-3A AIRBORNE
WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEM (AWACS) AIRCRAFT TO ICELAND.

OUR TARGET PERIOD FOR DEPLOYMENT TO KEFLAVIK IS OCTOBER
1978.

-- YOU WILL RECALL THAT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BROWN IN-
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FORMED FOREIGN MINISTER AGUSTSSON OF OUR DECISION DURING
THE MINISTER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON LAST SEPTEMBER AND
ADMIRAL KIDD DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT WITH THE MINISTER IN
NORFOLK AS WELL.

-- THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT THIS DEPLOYMENT WILL
VASTLY IMPROVE THE DEFENSE POSTURE OF THE ALLIANCE,
ICELAND AND THE US.

-- THIS DEPLOYMENT REPRESENTS THE VERY FIRST USE OF THESE
SOPHISTICATED,EXPENSIVE ASSETS OUTSIDE THE CONTINENTAL US.

-- THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT THE PRESENCE OF AWACS
AT KEFLAVIK IS AN EFFECTIVE REBUTTAL OF EARLIER CRITICISM
CONTAINED IN THAT CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE STUDY WHICH
RECEIVED SO MUCH UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY HERE.

-- THE UNITED STATES HAS PREVIOUSLY MET ITS OBLIGATIONS
TO REDUCE PERSONNEL TO AN AGREED LEVEL UNDER THE 1974 MOU.

-- ALTHOUGH SOME POSITIONS AT THE BASE WILL BECOME AVAIL-
ABLE THROUGH THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE EC-121T AIRCRAFT, THE
SHEER COMPLEXITY OF THIS NEW SYSTEM WILL REQUIRE THE
ADDITION OF APPROXIMATELY 200 MILITARY PERSONNEL.

-- WE CONSIDER THIS FIGURE TO BE THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM
NECESSARY TO SUPPORT AWACS DEPLOYMENT AND WE ASSUME THAT
THIS INCREASE UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES POSES NO DIFFICULTY
FOR THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT.

-- ALL ADDITIONAL MILITARY PERSONNEL WILL BE HOUSED IN
AGREED AREAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE
1974 MOU.

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-- WE ANTICIPATE THAT 20 CIVILIAN CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL
WILL BE REQUIRED TO FILL SENSITIVE POSITIONS REQUIRING
HIGH-LEVEL SECURITY CLEARANCES.

-- THE HANGAR PRESENTLY USED FOR EC-121T OPERATIONS MUST
BE MODIFIED AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW 5,000 SQ. FT.
BUILDING, CHAIN LINK SECURITY FENCE AND PAVED PARKING
AREA WILL BE REQUIRED.

-- THESE MODIFICATION AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS WILL BE

AWARDED TO ICELANDIC CONTRACTORS.

-- THE EMBASSY AND IDF ARE AT YOUR DISPOSAL FOR ANY
FURTHER INFORMATION YOU MAY REQUIRE IN CONNECTION WITH
AWACS DEPLOYMENT.

6. THIS IS JOINT STATE-DEFENSE MESSAGE. VANCE

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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